

EMERGENCY MEDICAL RESPONSE VEHICLE DISPATCH POLICY

Effective June 1, 1998

BACKGROUND AND PURPOSE

The purpose of this specific dispatch policy is to incorporate, in one location, the customs and practices, which have been in existence as Agency policy, and to affirm that such customs and practices continue to remain in effect.

AUTHORITY

Health & Safety Code, Division 2.5 entitled "Emergency Medical Services", Section 1797 et seq., specifically Sections 1797.200, 1797.204, and 1797.220 thereof, provides that a local EMS Agency shall be exclusively empowered to plan, implement and evaluate an emergency medical service system in accordance with Division 2.5.

GOAL

It is the goal of this policy to provide individuals in need of emergency pre-hospital medical assistance with qualified pre-hospital care in the most expeditious manner possible.

DEFINITIONS

1. **Ambulance Responder** - A permitted provider of an ambulance service, which is authorized to act as such in the area where the emergency pre-hospital medical service is requested and which utilizes vehicles licensed as such by the California Highway Patrol, which are equipped and used for the purpose of transporting sick, or injured persons.
2. **EMS Telecommunicator (Dispatcher)** - An individual employed (in a Public Safety Answering Point or private telecommunications center) to receive calls and communicate through the emergency medical dispatch system, with persons seeking emergency medical services and with public agencies and/or private entities and have the capability to dispatch the appropriate first responder unit and/or ambulance.
3. **Emergency Medical Dispatch System** - A system of telecommunications established to enable the general public to request emergency assistance or service, particularly as it pertains to pre-hospital emergency medical services and if approved by the EMS Agency, provide pre-

arrival instructions and dispatch a level of response as determined by the approved EMD protocols.

4. **Public Safety Agency Responder** -A public safety agency, sometimes referred to as "First Responder", which employs personnel who may or may not be trained in medical emergency procedures, and who may or may not be certified by this Agency, which responds to requests for pre-hospital emergency medical assistance utilizing a vehicle equipped in conformance with local EMS agency standards but does not serve as an Ambulance Responder. This does not refer to law enforcement agencies (i.e., CHP, Sheriff's Department, Police Department) unless the agency is providing services regulated by the Health and Safety Code, Division 2.5.
5. **Vehicle Response Modes** - Two generally accepted modes of responding to requests for emergency medical assistance which are defined as follows:

"Code Two (2) response" - A response mode without the use of emergency warning lights, lamps and/or sirens. This may also be referred to as "No Code" or "Non-Urgent".

"Code Three (3) response" - A response utilizing emergency driving techniques and systems, including warning lights, lamps, and sirens as approved by the California Highway Patrol and in conformity with the requirements of the California Vehicle Code. This may also be referred to as "Code" or "Urgent"

Note: A public safety agency may request an EMS responder to downgrade from a Code Three (3) mode of response to a Code Two (2) mode of response for safety purposes and/or may request that the EMS responder stage at a specific location for safety purposes until the scene/environment is secured or controlled for EMS operations to begin. Any EMS responder may request another EMS responder to either upgrade or downgrade the mode of response based on patient(s) condition.

POLICY

Any private telecommunication center and/or Public Safety Answering Point (PSAP) receiving a request for immediate and not scheduled emergency medical assistance from any member of the public that requires a Code Three (3) response per EMSA guidelines, shall promptly notify the appropriate communications center for either the First Responder and/or the appropriate permitted ambulance provider of the call.

If a dispatch agency utilizes an EMS Agency approved priority dispatch system, the dispatcher shall follow the protocols associated with that system.

In dispatching an EMS responder, the EMS telecommunicator shall utilize an EMS provider that is authorized to provide service in the area of the response.

Whenever, in response to a request for medical emergency pre-hospital services, an EMS telecommunicator (dispatcher) dispatches a public safety responder to the scene, the EMS telecommunicator (dispatcher) shall then simultaneously and/or immediately, if possible, dispatch an ambulance provider. In all cases of medical emergency, the EMS telecommunicator (dispatcher) must immediately dispatch the appropriate permitted ambulance provider. Except as otherwise provided herein, in reacting to a medical emergency request, the EMS telecommunicator (dispatcher) shall determine the appropriate level of vehicle response mode, and direct that all responders respond simultaneously and at the same level of vehicle response mode so as to ensure the shortest response time.

Whenever an EMS telecommunicator dispatches a public safety responder as well as an ambulance responder, he/she shall adhere to the following:

- a. If the EMS telecommunicator received a request from one responder to modify the level of response, either by "upgrade" or "downgrade", he/she shall concurrently notify the other responder of such modification and both responders shall then proceed at the revised modified level of response.
- b. Neither responder shall at any time proceed at a level of response other than as directed by the EMS telecommunicator.
- c. Both units shall respond in the same vehicle response mode unless notified by the EMS telecommunicator that one of the following conditions apply:
 1. The caller cancels the request for EMS, or
 2. The victim is reported to have left the area, or
 3. An EMS unit has contacted the patient and changes the urgency or the need for a second unit.